REAL LIFE

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Just 8 minutes CHANGED MY LIFE


I love helping women find their power


Our wonderful family – Gabbi, Mia, Ben, Louis, me and Lee


Me and my inspiring mum Yvonne

Kate Drummond, 52, helps empower women going through the changes of mid-life

Growing up, I had a very happy childhood with my older brother, Robin.

My mother, Yvonne, was a spiritual and self-assured woman – always with a crystal tucked into her bra – and taught me to go out into the world with my head held high.

'Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you will be right,' she'd say.

And my dad, Robert, was the best father I could have asked for.

After leaving school aged 16, with Mum's help I applied for lots of jobs and found a position in a bank.

'Where do you see yourself in 20 years?' I was asked at my interview.

'On the board of directors,' I replied confidently.

'This bank is 300 years old and there's never been a female director,' he laughed. This was 1990 – times were different, but they still hired me.


Me and my husband Lee – he is my rock

As it turned out I didn't make a director. Aged 23, I had 18 months off work after being diagnosed with ME – myalgic encephalomyelitis also known as chronic fatigue syndrome.

Getting back on my feet was my top priority and that's how I became interested in health and wellbeing.

Wanting to help myself, I took a qualification in personal training, and as I regained strength I got a marketing job for a gym, which eventually led me back to the corporate world as a PA in London in 2000.

In 2005, at 31, I had my daughter, Mia, but my relationship with her father ended by the time she was four months old.

A couple of years later I reconnected with Lee, then 40, a friend of my brother's who was recently divorced and a single dad to three kids, Ben, Gabbi and Louis.

It felt like our souls had met before – it was very easy and natural.

Mia was five and Lee's kids were teenagers when we merged our families in 2010, and I made the decision to temporarily step away from my career to make the transition easier.

The woman in the mirror didn't feel like me

As we all settled in together, I felt very lucky.

Then, two years into our new life, aged 38, I went to bed one Friday night and woke up feeling like a completely different person.

Staring at myself in the mirror, my heart raced and my palms felt clammy as I started to panic.

Woah! Who is that?

I had the same hair… same features… But the woman in the mirror didn't feel like 'me' – it was a total disconnect.

For eight minutes I stood facing the mirror.

Was I dreaming? Was I having an out-of-body experience?

Then fear took over.

When Lee found me, I was sitting on the floor in tears. But when he asked what was wrong, I had no idea.

My GP told me I must be depressed – but I didn't feel depressed.

For the next four years I had joint pain, brain fog, and my periods were all over the place – on one occasion I bled for 12 weeks. It was hell.

Going to the doctor I was misdiagnosed with everything from anxiety to rheumatoid arthritis.

Lee was my rock – we used to sit on the sofa together making notes of how I was feeling, trying to work out what was wrong.

I'd always thought menopause happened at around 50, but the more I researched, the more my symptoms pointed to it.

'Are you sure this isn't perimenopause?' I asked the GP over and over again.

'No, you're too young,' was the response.

By 42 my brain fog was so bad I'd just sit and cry with frustration and exhaustion.

Finding a new doctor who listened to me, I had blood tests, and was finally told I was perimenopausal.

That gave me some power back. I wasn't going mad – there was a reason I felt this way.

I tried HRT but it didn't suit me, so instead I looked into supportive health and lifestyle practices.

Realising my experience could help other women, in 2017 I became a certified health and lifestyle coach.

I wanted to be able to let women know mid-life can be a positive and empowering experience.

That same year, not long after marrying Lee, I stopped drinking alcohol.

And in 2018 we switched to a plant-based diet.

By 46 my periods had stopped, and menopause came with fibromyalgia triggered by the huge hormonal shifts.

But by that time I'd realised I wasn't alone. Many other women were experiencing the same.

Determined to help myself, I took qualifications in reiki healing and plant-based nutrition.

Slowly I went from feeling as though I was falling apart, to thinking of mid-life as a time when women can discover new purpose and energy.

I finally knew there was a reason I felt this way

In helping other women my philosophy is based around the simple steps I've learned to take in caring for myself, such as rising with the sun, meditating, doing Pilates, eating well, and living in balance.

I often think back to those life-changing eight minutes in front of the mirror, not recognising the woman staring back at me.

That inspired me to create my Eight Minute Method for my clients.

One of our biggest barriers to change is often time. Women tell me they don't have time to write in a journal, do a yoga session, or take up meditation.

But eight minutes is do-able. Most of us can dedicate eight minutes a day to an act of self-care.

Small wins are positive. In eight minutes you can try something new and see where it takes you.

To share my experience, I've written a book, *The Eight Minute Method*, which is due out in October.

Lee, now 59, is my biggest supporter, along with Mum, 83. Mia, 21, is building a wonderful life of her own, and is proud of my work, as are Ben, Gabbi and Louis.

I want women to choose themselves, their wellness and their power. Women's health matters!

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